

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate, the method comprising:

conveying a support, on which a photosensitive coating solution containing an organic solvent is coated such that a photosensitive coated layer is formed by the photosensitive coating solution;

drying the photosensitive coated layer by a first heating means to a dry-to-touch state;

heating the support and the photosensitive coated layer by a second heating means, which does not contact the support and the photosensitive coated layer, and which is provided at a downstream side of the first heating means, so that hardening of the photosensitive coated layer is promoted; and

changing a condition of heating of the second heating means while the support is being conveyed.

2. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein the first heating means heats the photosensitive coated layer to 90°C or more.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/895,264 (*Q64664*)

3. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein the first heating means dries the photosensitive coated layer such that a remaining amount of the organic solvent in the photosensitive coated layer is 5 wt% or less of the photosensitive coated layer.

4. (canceled).

5. (original): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein a heating system of the second heating means is a heat radiation system.

6. (original): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein a heating system of the second heating means is an induction heating system.

Claims 7-8. (canceled).

9. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein the condition of heating by the second heating means is controlled in accordance with a type of the photosensitive coated layer formed on the support, such that a temperature of the photosensitive coated layer immediately after heating by the second heating means is a predetermined temperature which is set in accordance with the type of the photosensitive coated layer.

Claims 10-11. (canceled).

12. (currently amended): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate, the method comprising:

supplying a plurality of supports that have different thicknesses or widths, the supports being coated with a photosensitive coating solution containing an organic solvent such that photosensitive coated layers are respectively formed by the photosensitive coating solution, the supported being connected together;

drying the photosensitive coated layers by a first heating means to a dry-to-touch state;

heating the supports and the photosensitive coated layers by a second heating means provided at a downstream side of the first heating means so that hardening of the photosensitive coated layers is promoted;

changing a condition of heating the supports and the photosensitive coated layers by the second heating means in accordance with thicknesses or widths of the supports.

13. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein the second heating means is a plurality of drying devices which are disposed along a conveying path of the supports, and amounts of heat supplied by the plurality of heating devices are respectively controlled in accordance with changes in dimensions of the supports.

14. (original): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, wherein after hot air drying of the coated layer by the first heating means, the second heating means radiates mid-infrared radiation or far infrared radiation to the

photosensitive coated layer and the support so as to heat the support and the photosensitive coated layer.

Claims 15-16. (canceled).

17. (currently amended): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 1, further comprising, ~~at a down stream side of the cooling step, a step~~ of forming an overcoat layer on the photosensitive coated layer.

18. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein the first heating means heats the photosensitive coated layers to 90°C or more.

19. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein the first heating means dries the photosensitive coated layers such that a remaining amount of the organic solvent in the photosensitive coated layers is 5 wt% or less of the photosensitive coated layers.

20. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein a heating system of the second heating means is a heat radiation system.

21. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein a heating system of the second heating means is an induction heating system.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/895,264 (*Q64664*)

22. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein the condition of heating by the second heating means is controlled in accordance with a type of the photosensitive coated layers formed on the supports, such that a temperature of the photosensitive coated layers immediately after heating by the second heating means is a predetermined temperature which is set in accordance with the type of the photosensitive coated layers.

Claim 23 (canceled).

24. (previously presented): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, wherein after hot air drying of the photosensitive coated layers by the first heating means, the second heating means radiates mid-infrared radiation or far infrared radiation to the photosensitive coated layers and the supports so as to heat the supports and the photosensitive coated layers.

25. (currently amended): A method for manufacturing a lithographic printing plate according to claim 12, further comprising, ~~at a down stream side of the cooling step, a step of forming overcoat layers on the photosensitive coated layers.~~